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Lifting the military ban against homosexuals involves two components; one is legal/political and the other is functional. The legal/political component can occur relatively quickly while the functional or implementation component will be an evolving and continual process.

My focus will be on the human issues involved in implementing the legal/political decision. My perspective will be from witnessing and participating in the inclusion of gay and lesbians in the San Francisco Police Department over the past decade. I got a close look at the early dynamics because I was in charge of Recruitment and Retention ten plus years ago when the issue was controversial for our city. My perspective is also from 28 years of experience including a decade of horses, motorcycles and crowd control in the tactical unit and also as a Marine Corps Reservist who experienced boot camp and stints of active duty from 1962 to 1968; I'm married to a psychologist, a father of two adult children and a grandfather; while I've obtained licensure as a psychologist and have been involved in numerous related projects (psychological screening, development of our field training and evaluation program, establishing our Equal Opportunity Employment Unit, and Peer Counseling Program), my professional strength and experience is in uniformed patrol; I am currently a patrol Lieutenant/watch commander in one of the busiest districts in San Francisco where the station is viewed by some to be an enclave of gay and lesbian officers. It is hoped that discussing some of the experiences we've had in San Francisco will be helpful.

In 1981 the San Francisco Police Department's hiring and promotional process was controlled by a Federal Court "Consent Decree" which resulted from a 1973 lawsuit alleging racial and sexual discrimination. The Police Department had agreed to reaching specific goals of percentage representation of women and minorities through out the application and testing process. Then, as is the case now, we were prohibited from





recruiting outside the 49 square miles of the city and county of San Francisco. To get sufficient numbers of qualified women and minority applicants required intensive focused recruitment which included using role models for outreach through out the city, billboards, radio spots, job fairs, special training and support for women and minority applicants who did sign up and as much media attention as we could generate. It was during this period that activists within the gay community decided to launch their own recruitment and retention program to encourage gay and lesbians to enter law enforcement.

When word got out that there was a recruitment effort involving gay and lesbians two things happened: first, it was assumed that the recruitment effort was sponsored by the police department; second, the media spread both fact and fiction with great alacrity and efficiency far and wide. A predictable result was that people inside and outside of the department, inside and outside of the city, inside and outside the country believed that the San Francisco Police Department was officially recruiting gay and lesbians. Also predictable, people reacted to this belief. As the head of recruitment and retention I had a "close up and personal" view of the reactions. There were letters quoting scripture establishing the sacrilege that was being committed plus my presumed involvement qualified me as a genuine sinner; there were calls from every where wanting information and a few plaintive calls from out of state gay or lesbians wanting to know how to sign up and we could not tell them anything more than the normal spiel about the application procedure. The community recruitment of gay and lesbians was strictly confidential and they counseled applicants to be as circumspect as they possibly could. In retrospect, that was very sound advice then for 1981 in San Francisco and will be relevant, at least initially, in 1993 and the military context.

The reactions by members of the San Francisco Police Department in 1981 are instructive for us today. They were intense and ranged the whole gamut of emotions and political spectrum. An example of one end of the continuum was an alleged statement that "If one of those fruits is put in here (the locker room) and looks at my body, I'll kill





em." The other end of the 1981 spectrum was represented by the weary street wise veterans who said, "I don't give a rusty f---. If they righteously get through the academy and, particularly, the Field Training and Evaluation Program, they pack their load and they keep their personal stuff to themselves, their welcome; there's enough work for everybody." Hardly a ringing endorsement but fair.

For the next several years, homosexual officers kept their own counsel and concentrated upon learning and doing their job. The original hue and cry against them quickly faded and homosexual officers experienced the same socialization/assimilation process of other, previously excluded groups. A primary lesson of inclusion in law enforcement is that you soon identify more closely with your job and fellow officers than with whatever segment of society you came from. Like the military, effectiveness is largely a function of teamwork and support from your peers. Also the severest of detractors are most commonly from the "outside" social group who championed inclusion in the first place. This happens in police work, in part, because the societal group expects "their" representatives to provide more or different service than the job allows. When they don't get what they want from "their" representatives, members of the societal group complain bitterly and claim betrayal. It is the "old guard" majority group who knowingly step up to defend their new colleagues.

This irony has its counterpart where "civilians" disparage an individual for their military role or "mind set". The individual, who understands and values the military or law enforcement function, soon learns that their occupational subculture is one of the most supportive and meaningful aspects of their life. This powerful socialization process occurs whether an individual is newly included or an "old guard" traditional member of the military or police family. The bottom line requirement is that the individual, any individual, demonstrate their commitment to the goals of their profession and to doing their job. With that prerequisite, the majority eventually looks upon individual differences of their colleagues as unimportant.





The assimilating and socialization of gays and lesbians into the San Francisco Police Department was well underway when the A.I.D.S. disaster struck. Concern and confusion about how A.I.D.S. was contracted initially regressed the inclusion process and replaced it with our embarrassed fear and withdrawal from our afflicted peers. Fortunately several factors caused this regrettable situation to be reversed.

During this same period, the San Francisco Police Department developed our peer support program. This officer to officer counseling program provided a forum which helped dispel myths and misconceptions about homosexuality. While the program was not developed with this purpose in mind, it was an obvious extension of dealing with human issues; if relationship problems are being talked about and one person has a heterosexual and the other person homosexual, their differences and similarities get discussed, fears resolved and myths dispelled. The similarities of problems, fears, and wishes far out weighed the differences.

When A.I.D.S. began to claim some of our officers, they had already earned the respect and caring of their heterosexual partners. The "straight" officers grieved their loss, writing articles and verbalizing a warriors lament for their fallen comrades. The magnitude of our loss and the magnitude of our shared humanity made sexual orientation a minuscule, irrelevant, and petty factor.

The San Francisco Police Experience can model that the issues surrounding inclusion of homosexuals is more hype than substance. Homosexuals will not self-disclose until it is safe and/or relevant for them to do so; they will not join the military in droves any more than they have the police department; neither job is for everybody. An irony is that we in police work have probably been more homophobic than the military services. It is only circumstances that required us to actively and publicly deal with the issues first. The military has had homosexual personnel all along. It is now time that the policies more closely match the reality.



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